

Genealogy Basics – Researching Irish Roots on the Ireland Reaching Out (irelandxo.com) Web Site

By Joe Petrie

BACKGROUND:

I am a member of Ireland Reaching Out, a genealogy society in Loughrea, Galway, Ireland. Their web site URL is irelandxo.com.

Members of the Friends of Irish Research joined Ireland Reaching Out a few years ago. In fact, our organizations affiliated about the same time.

Ireland Reaching Out has an electronic magazine called XO Chronicles. The part that I read each time that XO Chronicles is distributed is XO People which focuses on the world-wide Irish diaspora.

One evening, I was reading XO People when I decided to submit an article on one of my wife's granduncles. Specifically, the article was about John Joseph McGrath, who was a teenager when he migrated to Boston from Waterford County in 1902.

My genealogy notes for John Joseph included a large number of information sources, both oral history from four of his children as well transcripts copied from web sites like: Ancestry; FamilySearch; and the National Archives of Ireland. The notes were fairly well organized because I was helping 8 of his great-grandchildren prepare for a visit to Waterford County last April. They visited the Church Cemetery plot where John Joseph's parents and some of his siblings are buried (including my wife's grandmother).

INTRODUCTION:

I have submitted three XO People records. The first submission was a trial balloon.

I decided to submit as a member without knowing that my member User-id and Password were out of date. The Ireland Reaching Out staff (henceforth Galway staff) helped me get a new User-id and Password. Because it had happened before with other sites, I persisted.

Initially, I had reservations about continuing and the feeling that I was a little bit of an Ugly American.

Ireland Reaching Out software provided a Get Started Guide link. It covered items like preparing the material using Word; copying the material to their software etc.

I may have missed the instruction that suggested that I review the text before I submitted it. My review should have focused on format. When I pasted a copy of the document, the format in Word virtually disappeared. It was like writing an Email in Word and copying it into Gmail. Blank lines and bolding for example simply disappeared. The transcripts from genealogy databases seemed to have acquired extra blank lines. Thankfully, the Galway staff rescued me. The result still does not match the Word document but it is acceptable.

One challenge was to write a summary that did not exceed 250 characters. Six years ago, I retired from teaching the first course in Computer Science at MassBay Community College. One of the seven applications that I taught was EXCEL. I copied my first draft from Word to the A1 cell in EXCEL. Then I looked up the EXCEL functions to find the one that counted characters (LEN). I could not get it to work. Eventually, I did. I blame an EXCEL hiatus, age, my brain surgery and being a bit of an Uglier American.

Another challenge was to submit a photo of John Joseph McGrath. Because my wife's father was estranged from his wife's family, we met my wife's McGrath relatives long after John Joseph passed on. Initially, I submitted a photo of the gravestone in the plot for John Joseph's parents and siblings in the Catholic Cemetery in Kilcockan Civil Parish (now Knockanore) in Waterford County.

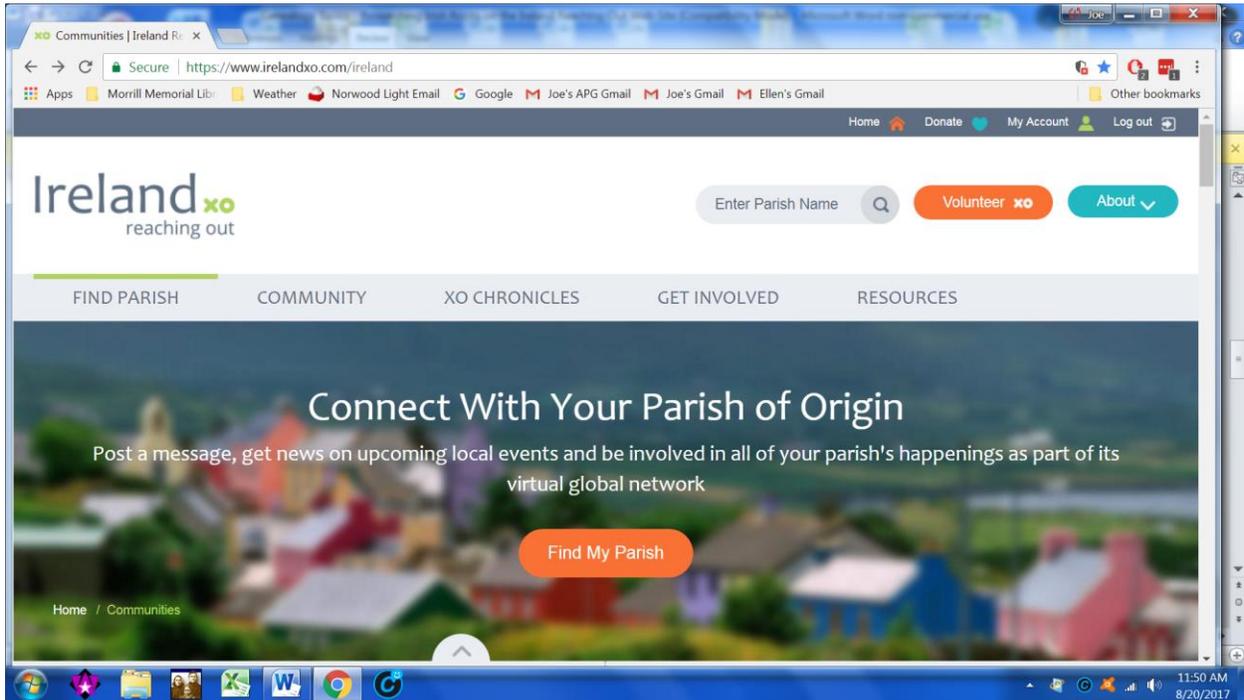
The final challenge was getting errors fixed. For example, John Joseph's Death record on a Genealogy Web Site did not exist or was incorrect. Because he lived in one Massachusetts County and died in another County, there should have been two records in Ancestry. There was one with the wrong year on it. I was feeling uglier! Again, the Galway staff rescued me! I concluded and believe that the Galway staff wanted me to succeed.

RESEARCHING THE XO PEOPLE IN XO CHRONICLES

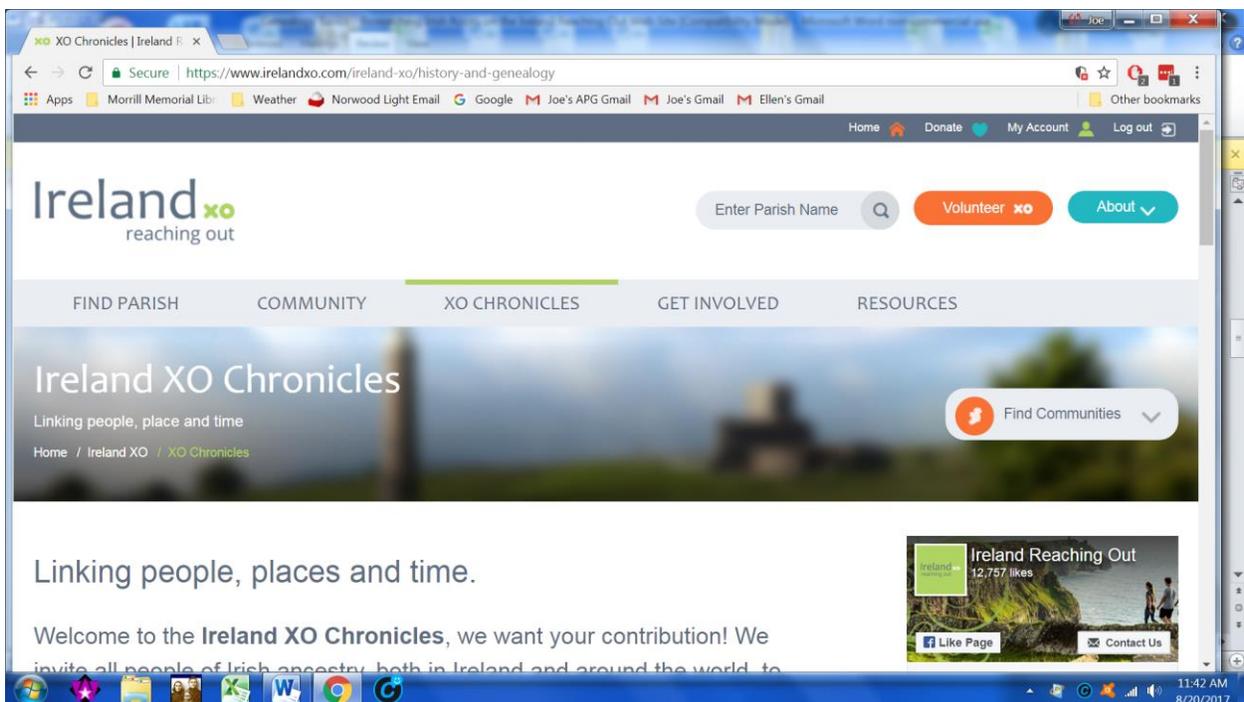
In this article, I'll only cover two functions of the Ireland Reaching Out's software. Specifically, I'll cover using the XO Chronicle's software to research people. In addition, I'll cover submitting an XO People genealogy biography for people who were born in Ireland before 1918 and who lived elsewhere.

There are nearly 1300 XO People records in XO Chronicles for people born in Ireland before 1918, I assume that all died elsewhere, for example: Australia; Canada; United Kingdom; United States; New Zealand etc. Given the fact that Ireland Reaching Out is really a new organization and XO Chronicles is nearly a year old, 1300 XO People less than a year is a fantastic accomplishment.

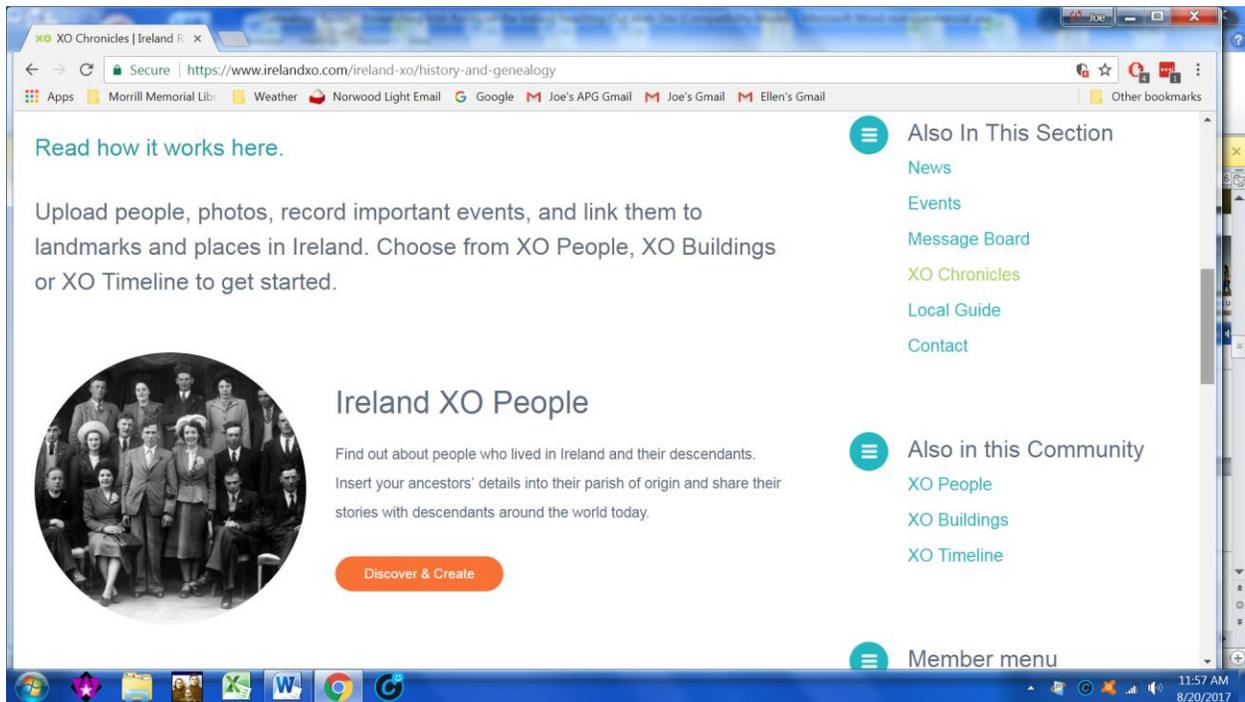
The following is the home page.



Select the XO CHRONICLES tab. The following screen print is the start page for XO CHRONICLES.

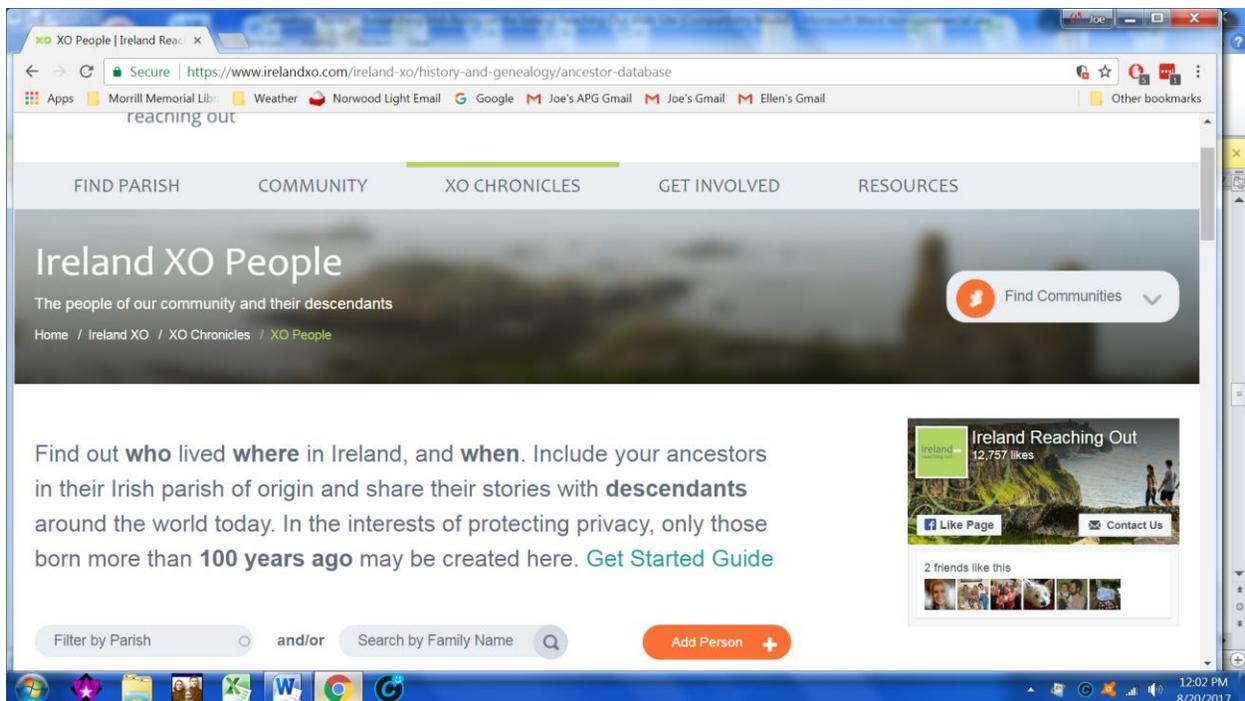


Scroll down to Ireland XO People.



Click on the orange Discover & Create Button.

At the bottom of the following screen print for XO People, there are three options: Filter by Parish and by Family Name; Search by Family Name; and Add Person. (I'll cover Add Person in the next section.) The first option allows the user to type in a County and a Family Name. The second option allows the user to enter only a Family Name.



Type a Civil Parish and click on the magnifying glass symbol in the Family Name fields results in a retrieval of all XO People in the Civil Parish. Leave all fields blank to see all the XO People in the database sorted alphabetically.

The user has to click on the magnifying glass symbol for the software to start the search.

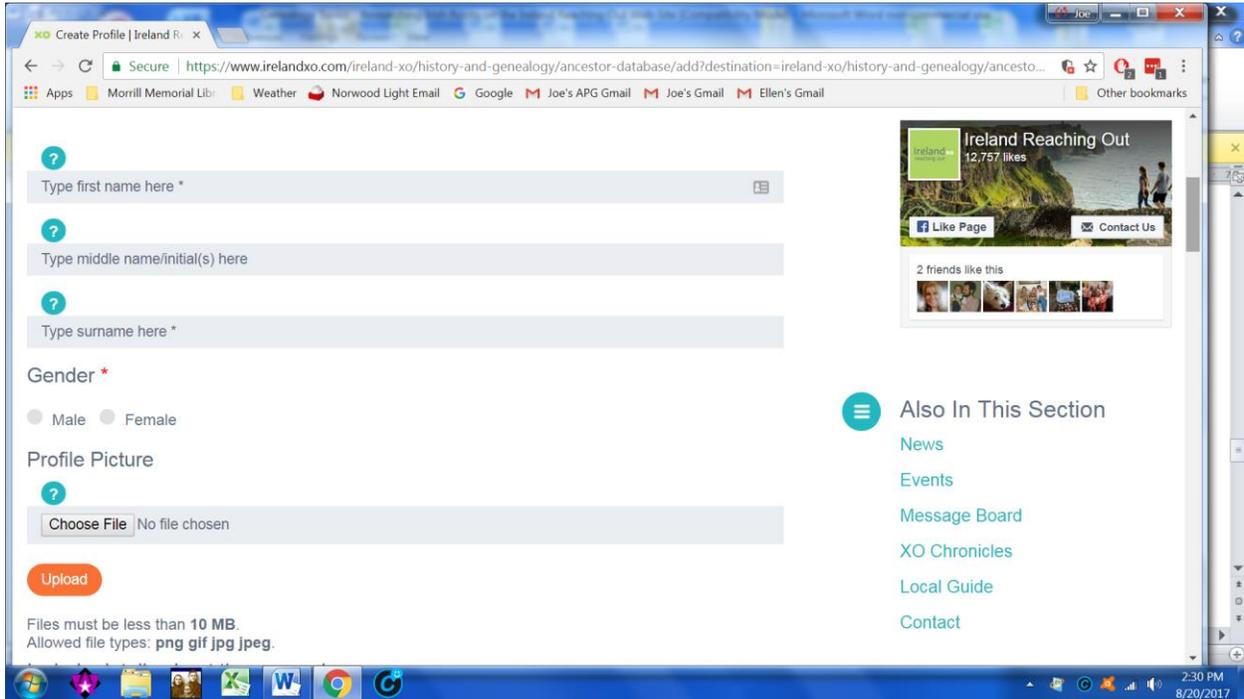
As of August 18, 2017, there were 1281 XO People records in the database. There was one redundant McGrath record in my McGrath Family Name search. (I only searched for Connolly, McGrath and O'Brien.)

Also, please note that some vitals are not verifiable on-line. For example, for Patrick Carroll's marriage to Ellen Brien in 1872 in the Knockanore Chapel in Waterford County must be a Civil Registration record for the marriage. Unfortunately, there is no image. In addition, I can't find a Parish record in Ancestry, Ireland Catholic Parish Registers or in the National Library of Ireland, Catholic Parish Registers. (Why my interest? My wife is an O'Brien with roots to Knockanore, Waterford and to Youghal, Cork. I have roots to Lismore, Waterford.) I assume that the author has a copy of the complete Civil Registration document.

I can't directly correspond with the individual who submitted the record. All correspondence flows through the Galway staff.

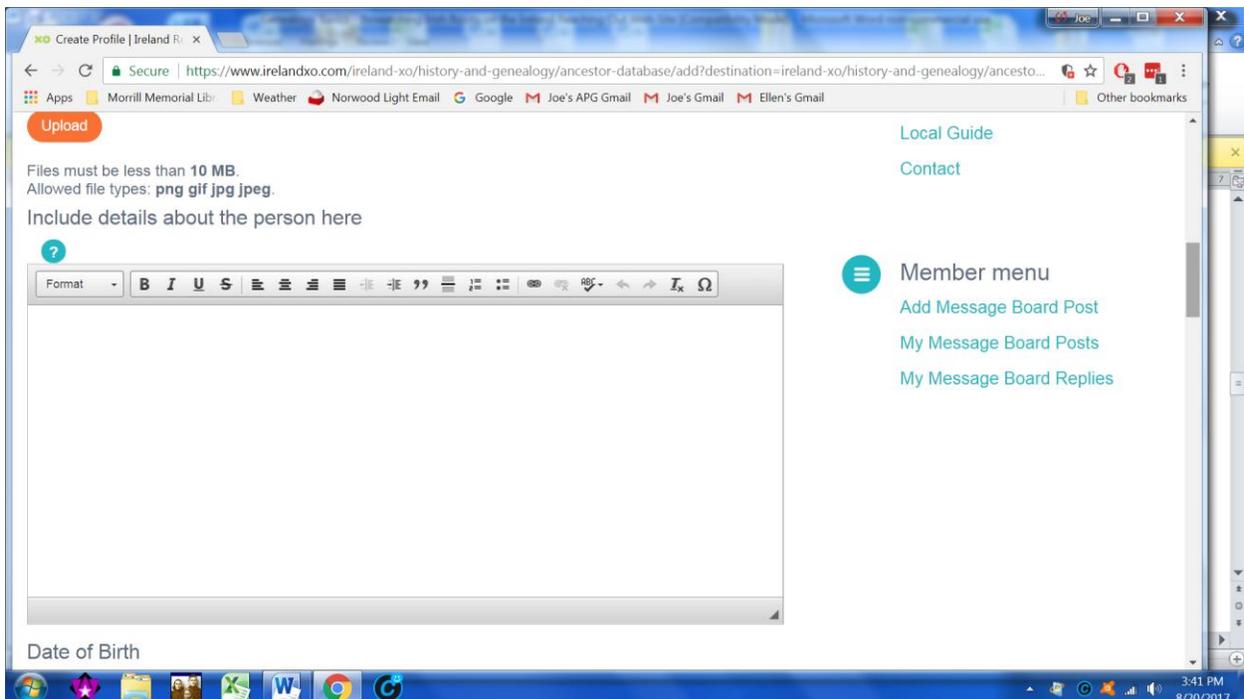
IRELAND REACHING OUT, XO CHRONICLES, XO PEOPLE ADD A RECORD SOFTWARE:

The first step is to create a profile for the XO Person. By the time I submitted the third document, I learned not to click on the orange Upload button. Yes, I was gun shy! I decided that I really needed to review everything. In addition, I concluded and believe that I could not edit the material that I submitted.



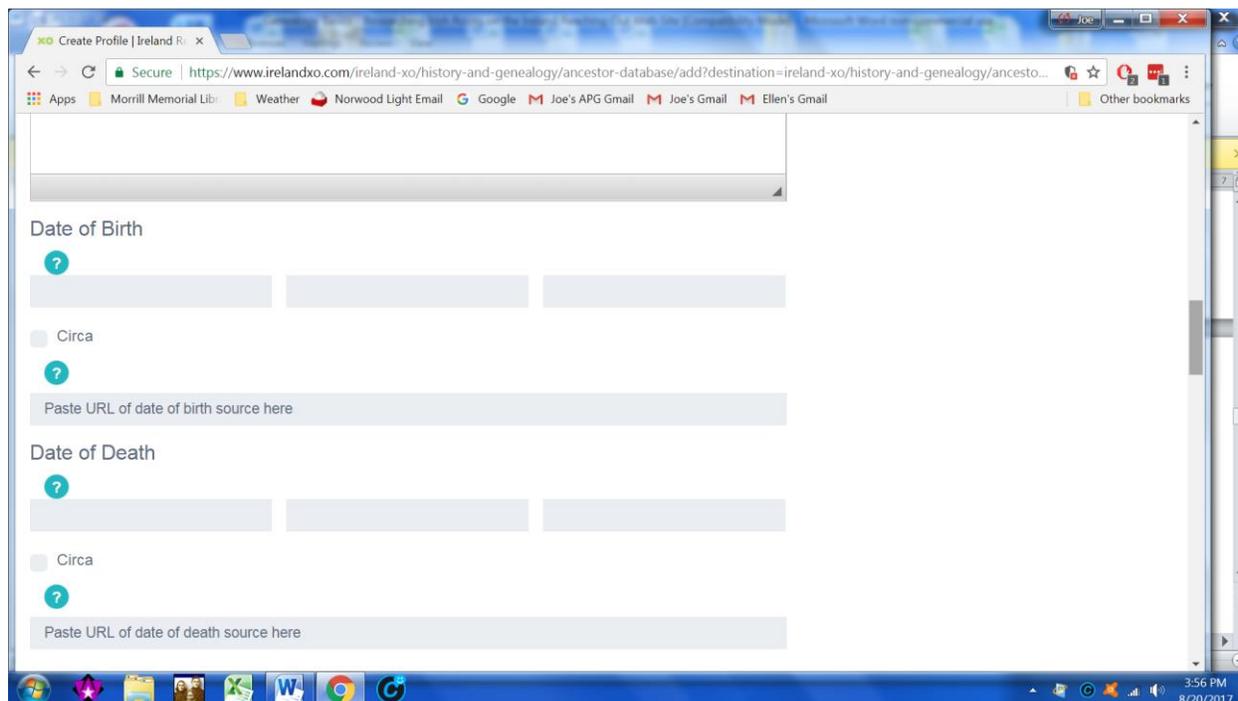
The following screen was a challenge. Years ago, I adopted what my early computer teachers taught students: Expect the Unexpected. It was not until I worked at NASA in the 1960s that I learned their version: Everything is subject to Murphy's Law. At home, we call our version the Petrie Ghost.

Frankly, I didn't expect the unexpected. The selecting formats from the format drop down list gave the most trouble. Finally, I decided to use the default Normal exclusively. It took a few iterations for me to make the decision. Ugly American again?



By the third submission, all the details were in one PDF formatted document. I copied and pasted the PDF formatted document and pasted it into the template. Then I added bolds, underlines, italics, numerous blank lines etc.

The following screen print shows some vitals.

A screenshot of a web browser window showing a form for entering birth and death information. The browser's address bar shows the URL: https://www.irelandxo.com/ireland-xo/history-and-genealogy/ancestor-database/add?destination=ireland-xo/history-and-genealogy/ancesto... The form has two main sections: 'Date of Birth' and 'Date of Death'. Each section has a text input field with a question mark icon, a 'Circa' checkbox, and a 'Paste URL of date of birth/death source here' field. The browser's taskbar at the bottom shows the time as 3:56 PM on 8/20/2017.

The Date of Birth field has driven me crazy! I typed in actual dates from official US documents like: Massachusetts and Federal Naturalization Declarations and Petitiona; and World War I and World War II Draft Registration records. I could not get used to entering days as 12th amd not 12). In addition, the Birth Dates were changed to the first day of the month. An Editor had to fix the record. Because I used multiple on-line sources, I did not enter the URLs. Also, some dates were oral history. I have concluded that for the day field there is a software problem. Maybe the field was defined as if the Birth Date is a Civil Registration Birth Date where the day is always the first day of a month/quarter.

The next screen collects among other things the brief 250 character document. I repeated the process as above. I added an extra step, copied my draft into cell A1 in EXCEL. I used the EXCEL LEN function to get a count of the characters. I edited A1 until I had an acceptable number of caracters. I copied it into WORD. I saved it and printed it. I resaved it in PDF format. I copied it into the XO people data entry form. Again, I added enters etc. The XO People form provided a character count.

I added a file for a photo.

Each submission was a learning experience. For example, I embedded a Pedigree Chart in a draft of the second submission. In my review, for example, I learned that I could not summit a Pedigree Chart no matter what I tried. Even text (TXT) format would not work. Finally, I saved the XO People submission without a Pedigree Chart. And I submitted it!

The following are the URLs for my three records:

- <https://www.irelandxo.com/ireland-xo/history-and-genealogy/ancestor-database/john-joseph-mcgrath>
- <https://www.irelandxo.com/ireland-xo/history-and-genealogy/ancestor-database/helena-obrien>
- https://www.irelandxo.com/ireland-xo/history-and-genealogy/ancestor-database?parish_name=&profile_surname=Connolly

SUMMARY:

I have recommended that my peers at the Friends of Irish Research add records. I offered to help them.

In my seminars, I'll recommend that attendees join and submit.

I plan on submitting a few more records. The following ancestors are under consideration; my wife's paternal great grandmother from Tuam, Galway; my mother's paternal great grandfather from Gowran, Kilkenny; and my father's great grandfather from Thurles, Tipperary.

My approach is time consuming. Also, it does not follow the software's URL requirements. It is probably due to so many URLs that disappeared over time. I'll admit it! I am always concerned about URLs disappearing and changing.

Finally, a new release of the software is expected to be released soon.

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Your corrections, comments and suggestions are appreciated. Please Email me at:

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Please note that Friends of Irish Research is repository for my published genealogy articles in the *Newfoundland Ancestor*; and in *EZINE*, the electronic magazine of the Cape Breton Genealogy (See friendsofirishresearch.org; specifically the Tabs for Publications and Joe's Free Web Sites.)